

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2018

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ **The Invisible Boy** (*Trudy Ludwig*)
Brian is not really invisible, but he certainly feels that way. His classmates never pick him for kickball teams, invite him to birthday parties, or notice his drawing talent. When the other students tease a new boy named Justin, Brian draws a picture for him and finally makes a friend. A story about acceptance.

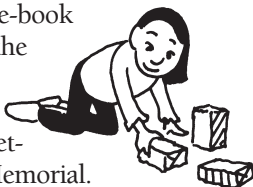
■ **Hooray for Chefs** (*Kurt Waldendorf*)
Tucked away in the kitchen, a chef prepares meals for others to eat. This nonfiction book takes readers behind the scenes to see how chefs follow recipes, use special tools, and serve up delicious food. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ **Mercy Watson to the Rescue** (*Kate DiCamillo*)
Oh, no! Mr. and Mrs. Watson's floor is collapsing, and they're counting on their pet pig, Mercy, to save them. Instead of going for help, however, the pig goes looking for breakfast and gets into mischief. The first book in the Mercy Watson series.



■ **Maya Lin: Artist-Architect of Light and Lines** (*Jeanne Walker Harvey*)
When Maya Lin was a little girl, she built buildings and towns made of paper and dreamed of being an architect. This picture-book biography tells the story of the girl who grew up to design the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



I ♥ poetry

Colorful descriptions, kid-friendly topics, and playful language make children's poems a fun tool for boosting your youngster's reading skills. Welcome poetry into your family's reading routine, and use these activities to enjoy it together.

Notice descriptions

If a poem mentions "pretty painted horses" and "spinning dizzily 'round and 'round," will your child guess that the verse is about a carousel? Call his attention to descriptive language with this idea. Secretly choose a poem, and read a few lines without telling him the title. Ask him what it's about. Now have him read a poem aloud so you can figure out its topic.

Bring poetry to life

Your youngster may understand a poem better—and appreciate it more—if he explores its subject firsthand. After reading about "a stack of fluffy pancakes with a melting square of butter," plan a

pancake breakfast. Or read a poem about "prickly pinecones," and let your child collect pinecones outside to examine how prickly they feel.

Play with words

Poets might swap beginning sounds in words (*puddly cuppy* instead of *cuddly puppy*) or rhyme words at the ends of lines ("I'd love a bowl of *custard*, but you can hold the *mustard*"). Encourage your youngster to listen for wordplay like that when you read poetry to him. Then, have fun making up your own silly words or rhyming pairs together. ♥



Listen while you walk

Encourage your little one to practice listening while you take a walk together. Try this twist on I Spy.

Tell your child you're going to walk quietly so you can hear sounds all around you. Choose a sound to imitate, and have the other person try to identify it.

You might say, "I hear, with my little ear, a sound that goes *ring ring*." Can she guess that you're hearing bells or wind chimes? Or your youngster may say, "I hear, with my little ear, something that sounds like *rumble-rumble-rumble*." You might say a garbage truck or a motorcycle.

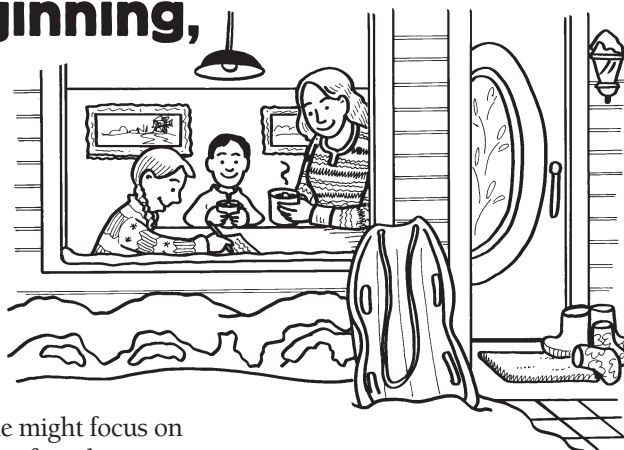
The next time, take a new route or walk at another time of day so your youngster can listen for different sounds. ♥



Story writing: Beginning, middle, end

Your youngster probably has lots of exciting stories in her head. Help her write them down with these tips for getting started, adding details, and wrapping things up.

● **Beginning.** Starting her story will be easier if your child zeroes in on a specific event. Encourage her to “think small.” Instead of writing, “We had a snow day,” she might focus on one part of her day: “I went sledding with my friends on our snow day.”

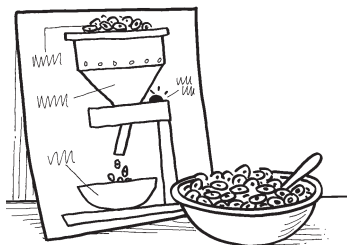


● **Middle.** Ask your youngster questions that will help her find at least two or three details to include. You could say, “How did you feel while you were soaring down the hill?” or “What happened that you didn’t expect?” She may write about snow flying into her face or spotting a deer.

● **End.** A new writer may need help deciding how a story should end. Try asking, “What’s the last thing you remember?” Perhaps she’ll complete her tale with a sentence about going inside to drink hot chocolate with you!♥

Engineer and write

A machine that pours cereal and milk? A robot that tracks down missing socks? Drawing and labeling diagrams of imaginary devices encourages your child to combine engineering and writing skills.



First, explore a few diagrams for real machines together. You can often find these in instruction manuals for household items like a vacuum cleaner or a blender.

Next, ask your youngster to draw a diagram of a contraption he would like to own. Suggest that he label each part. His “cereal maker” could include a timer you set the night before so cereal is ready at breakfast time. Or his “sock finder” might feature a radar dish for zeroing in on any sock without a partner.

Finally, have him walk you through his design and describe how the machine works. What else can he invent?♥



Parent to Parent

Reading the forecast

My daughter Ava was fascinated by the idea of a groundhog “predicting” the weather on Groundhog Day. I decided to have her read a forecast so she could see how people really get information about the weather.

Together, we looked at the weather page of the newspaper. She figured out that a sun symbol with a tiny cloud means mostly sunny, and I explained that a squiggly line tells us it’ll be windy. Then, I had her read the high and low temperatures. Finally, we read tomorrow’s full forecast together.

When I mentioned this to Ava’s teacher, she said it was a great way for my daughter to see nonfiction reading as useful in everyday life—and to practice reading words, numbers, and symbols. Now Ava checks the forecast as part of her bedtime routine and proudly reports the weather so we know what to wear.♥



Q&A From pictures to words

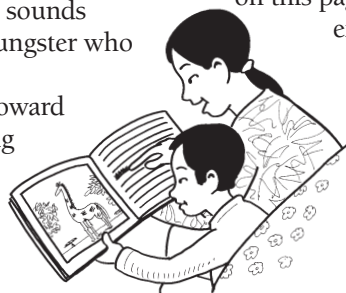
Q When my kindergartner “reads,” he often ignores the words and makes up his own story based on the pictures. What should I do?

A Your son’s behavior sounds totally normal for a youngster who is just learning to read.

Gently nudge him toward the next step—noticing words—by running your finger under the text as you read aloud to him. When you come to a word that’s

illustrated (say, *giraffe*), tell your son, “This word starts with G. Can you look at the picture and figure out the word?”

You can also say, “Do you see a word on this page that you know?” He’ll be excited to point out ones he has learned in school like *the*, *and*, and *friend*. Another idea is to ask a librarian to help you find a book with a character who shares his name—he’s guaranteed to spot at least one word he recognizes throughout the book!♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children’s reading, writing, and language skills.

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